

# COOL AIR CIRCULATION TYPE AXIAL FLOW FAN FOR REFRIGERATOR

## BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

### 5 Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to a cool air circulation type axial flow fan for a refrigerator which is capable of blowing cool air to a freezing chamber and a chilling chamber, and more particularly to a cool air circulation type axial flow fan for a refrigerator in which several important design factors of the fan can be optimally determined to reduce flow noise over a relatively wide frequency band.

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### Description of the Related Art

15 Generally, a refrigerator stores foodstuffs in a fresh state for a long time using cool air obtained by a refrigerating cycle. The cool air is used to cool down the foodstuffs or prevent decomposition of the foodstuffs. A cool air circulating fan is disposed in a flow channel through which the cool air is circulated for blowing the cool air to a chilling chamber or a freezing chamber.

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Fig. 1 is a side view, in longitudinal section, of a general refrigerator. Fig. 2 is a front view of a conventional cool air circulation type axial flow fan, and Fig. 3 is a side view of the conventional cool air circulation

25

type axial flow fan.

As shown in Fig. 1, the refrigerator basically comprises a outer case 1 having an open front part, an inner case 2 disposed in the outer case 1 and spaced apart from the outer case 2, a chilling chamber A mounted at the upper part in the inner case 2, a freezing chamber B mounted at the lower part in the inner case 2, a machinery chamber C provided below the freezing chamber B, a door 3 pivotably attached at the upper front part to the outer case 1, and another door 4 pivotably attached at the lower front part to the outer case 1.

Between the outer case 1 and the inner case 2 is defined a flow channel, through which the cool air is supplied to the chilling chamber A or the freezing chamber B. In the flow channel at the freezing chamber B is mounted an evaporator 5 for producing the cool air by heat exchange with atmospheric air. In the flow channel above the evaporator 5 is mounted a blower 10 for upwardly blowing the cool air having passed through the evaporator 5.

In the machinery chamber C are mounted a compressor 6 connected to the evaporator 5 via a refrigerant pipe, a condenser (not shown), and an expander (not shown), which constitute together a refrigerating cycle to generate the cool air. The resulting cool air is supplied to the chilling chamber A or the freezing chamber B. Consequently, the chilling chamber A or the freezing chamber B are maintained at

low temperatures, respectively.

The blower 10 includes an axial flow fan 12 attached to a rotating shaft of a motor for blowing the cool air. As shown in Fig. 2, the axial flow fan 12 comprises a hub 12a attached to the motor via the rotating shaft of the motor, and four spaced blades 12b mounted on the outer circumference of the hub 12a.

Each of the blades 12b has a leading edge LE facing the direction of rotation, a trailing edge TE opposite to the leading edge, a blade tip BT connected between the outer ends of the leading and trailing edges LE and TE, and a blade hub BH connected to the hub 12a.

Each of the blades 12b also has a front surface P to which a pressure created by the introduced cool air is applied (hereinafter referred to as a positive pressure surface P), and a rear surface D opposite to the positive pressure surface P (hereinafter referred to as a negative pressure surface D).

Each of the blades 12b is formed in such a manner that a sweep angle  $\alpha$  of each of the blades 12b is relatively small, for example, approximately 25 degrees.

The sweep angle  $\alpha$  indicates the degree in which each of the blades 12a is inclined from the radius of the fan toward the direction of rotation. Specifically, the sweep angle  $\alpha$  is an angle defined between a line connecting the center of the blade hub BH to the center of the blade tip BT and an extension of another line connecting the center of the hub 12a to center

of the blade hub BH.

When the conventional cool air circulation type axial flow fan 12 with the afore-stated construction is operated by means of the motor, the sweep angle  $\alpha$  is relatively small. Consequently, a sufficient strong cool air flow suitable for a large pressure loss occurring across a complex flow channel in a large-sized refrigerator is not created. Furthermore, the cool air flow advances in the axial direction of the fan with the result that noise is increased.

#### SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Therefore, the present invention has been made in view of the above problems, and it is an object of the present invention to provide a cool air circulation type axial flow fan for a refrigerator in which several important design factors, such as the number of blades, a sweep angle of each of the blades, etc., of the fan can be optimally determined to create a sufficiently strong cool air flow suitable for a large pressure loss occurring across a complex flow channel in the refrigerator, and reduce noise.

In accordance with the present invention, the above and other objects can be accomplished by the provision of a cool air circulation type axial flow fan for circulating cool air in a refrigerator, comprising a hub connected to a motor via a

rotating shaft of the motor, and a plurality of spaced blades 12b mounted on the outer circumference of the hub, wherein the number of the blades is set to between 6 and 8, and each of the blades has a sweep angle of between 50 and 65 degrees.

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#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The above and other objects, features and other advantages of the present invention will be more clearly understood from the following detailed description taken in  
10 conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which:

Fig. 1 is a side view, in longitudinal section, of a general refrigerator;

Fig. 2 is a front view of a conventional cool air  
15 circulation type axial flow fan;

Fig. 3 is a side view of the conventional cool air circulation type axial flow fan;

Fig. 4 is a front view of a cool air circulation type axial flow fan according to the present invention;

20 Fig. 5 is a side view of the cool air circulation type axial flow fan according to the present invention;

Fig. 6 is a graph illustrating relations between noise levels and the number of blades of the cool air circulation type axial flow fan according to the present invention;

25 Fig. 7 is a graph illustrating relations between noise

levels and sweep angles of the cool air circulation type axial flow fan according to the present invention;

Fig. 8 is a partial front view of a preferred embodiment of a blade, which is formed by blade boundary data of the cool air circulation type axial flow fan according to the present invention;

Fig. 9 is a view illustrating a maximum camber position of the blade of the cool air circulation type axial flow fan according to the present invention; and

Fig. 10 is a graph illustrating relations between noise levels and frequencies of the cool air circulation type axial flow fan according to the present invention.

#### DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Fig. 4 is a front view of a cool air circulation type axial flow fan according to the present invention, and Fig. 5 is a side view of the cool air circulation type axial flow fan according to the present invention. Fig. 6 is a graph illustrating relations between noise levels and the number of blades of the cool air circulation type axial flow fan according to the present invention, and Fig. 7 is a graph illustrating relations between noise levels and sweep angles of the cool air circulation type axial flow fan according to the present invention.

Fig. 8 is a partial front view of a preferred embodiment of a blade, which is formed by blade boundary data of the cool air circulation type axial flow fan according to the present invention, Fig. 9 is a view illustrating a maximum camber position of the blade of the cool air circulation type axial flow fan according to the present invention, and Fig. 10 is a graph illustrating relations between noise levels and frequencies of the cool air circulation type axial flow fan according to the present invention.

As shown in Figs. 4 and 5, the cool air circulation type axial flow fan according to the present invention comprises a hub 52a attached to a rotating shaft of a motor. The hub 52a is formed in the shape of a cylinder. The hub 52a has a front surface 52a' and a rear surface 52a'' having the same diameter as the front surface 52a'. On the outer circumference of the hub 52a are mounted between 6 and 8 spaced blades 52b. Preferably, the number of the blades 52b is 7.

Each of the blades 52b has a leading edge LE into which the cool air is introduced, a trailing edge TE opposite to the leading edge, a blade tip BT connected between the outer ends of the leading and trailing edges LE and TE, and a blade hub BH connected to the hub 52a.

Each of the blades 52b also has a front surface P to which a pressure created by the introduced cool air is applied (hereinafter referred to as a positive pressure surface P), and

a rear surface D opposite to the positive pressure surface P (hereinafter referred to as a negative pressure surface D).

Each of the blades 52b is formed in such a manner that the trailing edge TE is disposed closer to the rear surface 52a" of the hub 52a than the leading edge LE to provide prescribed curvature between the leading edge LE and the trailing edge TE.

Each of the blades 52b is also formed in such a manner that a sweep angle  $\alpha$ , which is an angle defined between a first line L1 connecting the center  $C_{BH}$  of the blade hub BH to the center  $C_{BT}$  of the blade tip BT and an extension of a second line L2 connecting the center  $C_H$  of the hub 12a to center  $C_{BH}$  of the blade hub BH, is set to between 50 and 65 degrees, preferably  $51^\circ \pm 1^\circ$ .

The aforesaid axial flow fan 52 is rotated counterclockwise when seen from the positive pressure surface D.

The inventor of the present invention have performed several experiments for determining design factors having an effect on noise generated by the axial flow fan 52, and come to the conclusion that the design factors having a relatively large effect on noise include the number of blades and a sweep angle of each of the blades.

Measurement of noise levels based on the different number of blades has been made while other design factors of the fan



have been constant. The result is that the lowest noise is generated in the axial flow fan having seven blades, as shown in Fig. 6. On the other hand, measurement of noise levels based on different sweep angles has been made while other design factors of the fan have been constant. The result is that the lowest noise is generated in the axial flow fan having a sweep angle  $\alpha$  of between 50 and 65 degrees, as shown in Fig. 7.

In conclusion, noise is minimized under a condition that a sweep angle  $\alpha$  of the axial flow fan is set to between 50 and 65 degrees and the number of blades of the axial flow fan is 7.

Preferably, the blades 52b of the axial flow fan 52 according to the present invention may be formed in such a manner that one of the blades 52b has boundary data, as indicated in Table 1, at every 10 points on the blade hub BH, the trailing edge TE, the blade tip BT, and the leading edge LE on the assumption that the center of the hub 52 on the rear surface 52a" of the hub 52 is the starting point (0, 0, 0) as shown in Fig. 8.

[Table 1] Boundary data of a blade

No	X	Y	Z
1	-6.818	19.333	-5.721
2	-6.344	19.494	-5.382
3	-5.055	19.867	-4.421

4	-3.152	20.256	-3.014
5	-0.861	20.482	-1.316
6	1.560	20.441	0.480
7	3.783	20.148	2.244
8	5.440	19.765	3.935
9	6.462	19.455	5.218
10	6.818	19.333	5.721
11	3.564	26.452	4.197
12	0.702	32.147	3.047
13	-2.539	36.801	1.642
14	-6.290	40.408	-0.104
15	-10.503	42.906	-2.306
16	-14.461	44.428	-4.977
17	-17.579	45.249	-7.567
18	-20.171	45.352	-10.768
19	-21.193	45.286	-13.063
20	-21.822	44.987	-13.317
21	-23.625	44.067	-14.980
22	-26.463	42.423	-17.016
23	-30.064	39.952	-18.629
24	-33.692	36.944	-20.037
25	-36.862	33.781	-21.348
26	-39.307	30.902	-22.337
27	-40.866	28.809	-22.736

28	-41.419	28.088	-22.599
29	-41.245	27.615	-22.566
30	-40.352	26.984	-22.285
31	-37.988	27.200	-21.336
32	-34.702	27.332	-19.245
33	-30.397	27.357	-17.986
34	-24.991	27.134	-15.308
35	-18.999	25.941	-12.216
36	-13.088	23.262	-9.157
37	-6.818	19.333	-5.721

At this time, the sweep angle  $\alpha$  of each of the blades 52b is 50 degrees. Each of the blades 52b is linearly formed in such a manner that pitch angles  $\beta$  at the blade hub BH and the blade tip BT are 40 degrees and 31.5 degrees, respectively. Also, a rake angle  $r$  of 21 degrees is formed on the positive pressure surface P.

Of course, it should be noted that the sweep angle  $\alpha$ , the pitch angle  $\beta$ , and the rake angle  $r$  may have prescribed allowable ranges, preferably within a range of 1 degree, respectively.

The pitch angle  $\beta$  is an angle defined between a line of a vertical axis Y, which is parallel to another vertical axis y, and a third line connected from the leading edge LE to the trailing edge TE. The rake angle  $r$  is an angle defined between

the line of the vertical axis Y, which is parallel to the vertical axis y, and a fourth line intersecting the blade hub BH and the blade tip BT.

Each of the blades 52b is also formed in such a manner that a maximum camber position MCP is uniformly distributed from the blade hub BH to the blade tip BT. The maximum camber position MCP is 0.7 on the assumption that positions of the leading and trailing edges LE and TE are 0 and 1, respectively.

At this time, a maximum camber ratio is also uniformly distributed from the blade hub BH to the blade tip BT. The maximum camber ratio is 7.0 %. The maximum camber ratio may be changed from 6.0% to 8.0%.

The maximum camber position MCP indicates the point of each of the blades 52b farthest from a chord line CL, which is a line connected between the leading edge LE and the trailing edge TE, and the maximum camber ratio indicates the ratio in percentage of a maximum camber length MC, which is a distance between the chord line CL and the maximum camber position MCP of each of the blades 52b, to the length of the chord line CL.

In comparison of a novel fan having seven blades with a sweep angle of 50 degrees according to the present invention to a conventional fan having for blades with a sweep angle of 25 degrees, the novel fan generates remarkably less noise over a wide frequency band as compared to the conventional fan, as shown in Fig. 10. Furthermore, the novel fan generates noise

over 4.5 dB(A) lower than the conventional fan in case that the flow rates of the novel and conventional fans are the same.

Consequently, it is easily understandable that flow loss is also reduced with reduction of the noise in the fan according to the present invention, and thus power consumption is reduced under the condition of the same air flow.

As apparent from the above description, the present invention provides a cool air circulation type axial flow fan for a refrigerator in which several important design factors, such as the number of blades, a sweep angle of each of the blades, etc., of the fan can be optimally determined to create a sufficiently strong cool air flow suitable for a large pressure loss occurring across a complex flow channel in the refrigerator in case that the axial flow fan according to the present invention is disposed in a flow channel of the refrigerator, whereby noise generated over a wide frequency band is remarkably reduced. Furthermore, power consumption is reduced under the condition of the same air flow as flow loss is reduced, and reliability of the refrigerator is further improved.

Although the preferred embodiments of the present invention have been disclosed for illustrative purposes, those skilled in the art will appreciate that various modifications, additions and substitutions are possible, without departing from the scope and spirit of the invention as disclosed in the

accompanying claims.